

**Vermont State Workforce Development Board**

Relocation and Recruitment Committee - Meeting Minutes

February 2, 2023

4:00 pm – 5:00 pm

**Committee Members in Attendance**: Gary Scott, Jen Stromsten, Molly Mahar, Amelia Seman, John Burnham, Peter Edelmann, Patricia Moulton

**Guests in Attendance**: Victoria Biondolillo, Abigail Rhim

Introductions/Board Updates

Tori began by asking the group to go around and provide introductions and updates. She then shared that upon her return to the State Workforce Development Board, she is now a senior policy advisor to the Governor regarding workforce. She noted that relocation and recruitment is a priority in workforce policy development. She also shared that Abby would distribute the Governor’s budget summary and an invitation to the Board’s weekly office hours to connect with herself or Abby.

Strategic Plan Overview

Abby noted that the Board is developing a strategic plan. There is a quarterly board meeting in February where board members will discuss the strategic plan. Eventually, a section or “one-pager” on the Relocation and Recruitment committee will be included in the strategic plan.

Review Committee One-Pager

Tori began by noting that this committee is unique in that it may have a $200,000.00 allocation that would allow for a selected vendor to map out the current resources in Vermont that help relocate New Americans to the state. The hope is that this money would allow for the state to become more unified and efficient to help New Americans. She shared that this could be the first large project that the committee undertakes.

Pat highlighted that 49% of Vermonters do *not* want people to relocate to the state. She asked how this would play into this committee.

Tori suggested that regardless, the work is necessary but some sort of marketing/educational campaign might need to occur simultaneously.

John asked what specific group of individuals we are referencing “New Americans” in the document?

Tori clarified that it would primarily be refugees, however, it would hopefully be New Americans at large, in order to not be as specific as federal funding can be and provide support to more people.

Gary Scott stressed the need for non-entry level folks who can be brought in and trained. He added that through the federal process, you are unable to recruit someone to work as “unskilled labor.” He highlighted the need to classify jobs as “skilled”, even if the education level requirement might not be in order to more easily recruit workers.

Tori added that this committee could serve useful by providing businesses with information on visas.

Jen added that in her experience working with refugees, they tend to come on a skilled work visa, but then remain through different avenues. She stressed the importance of cataloguing these pathways. She added that the group should also look at models outside of Vermont to see what works well and what doesn’t.

Pat asked if asylum seekers were also included on this list.

Tori stated that the goal of this allocation is to keep qualifications for support as broad as possible. She also summarized that from this conversation, this group should look at licensing and funding streams, noting how expensive this process can be for employers.

Amelia added that perhaps we could broaden this allocation to anyone trying to come to Vermont, including other states.

Tori agreed with Amelia, stating that the larger goal of this committee should be recruitment efforts for all, not just those from outside of the United States.

Gary added that the UVM Medical Center already has recruitment relationships in several countries. He offered their support when the time comes.

Jen stressed identifying guiding principles that will help all new and current Vermonters. While it is great to solve a certain problem, for example a micro transit issue, it would be best to make policy recommendations down the road from general identified issues that will help all, including newcomers.

Tori agreed. She suggested that if this allocated funding goes through, the committee should identify guiding principles.

John added that it would be interesting to know what sectors demand most need, right now. This could potentially impact where the group focuses time and energy.

Tori volunteered getting data from the Department of Labor to specify sectors.

Pat summarized that this work is applicable to any sort of recruitment. She highlighted that this should be viewed as the beginning of a process that will lead to great opportunity.

Tori added that a piece of this needs to be retaining current Vermont college students.

Closing Thoughts

Tori noted that she will send out the committee’s one-pager, requesting feedback. She will also send out the white-paper on the New American allocation.

Pat noted one final thought of recruiting second homeowners. This could perhaps include climate refugees.

Adjourn

Respectfully submitted by Abigail Rhim.

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Abigail Rhim, Deputy Director, Vermont State Workforce Development Board